of India in its Resolution dated 21st April, 2004 read with corrigendum dated 29th April, 2004 has authorized the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) as the Designated Agency to receive written complaints from Whistleblowers. The Resolution, *inter-alia* also has provisions for providing protection to the informer from harassment and victimization, besides keeping the identity of the Whistleblower secret. The Central Vigilance Commission has received 45 cases of harassment to Whistleblowers, so far. Wherever felt necessary, the Commission gives suitable directions to the concerned organizations to ensure that the complainants (Whistleblowers) are not harassed in any way. Wherever a transfer of Whistleblower is made as a measure of harassment, the Commission advises the concerned organization to maintain status-quo. In two cases, the Commission has advised the concerned organization to take appropriate action against the officers found harassing the Whistleblower.

Performance appraisal of IAS officers

2253. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry is changing the guidelines for performance appraisal of IAS officers from 2008; and

(b) if so, the new modification Government is proposing for better performance and integrity of the officers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) and (b) With a view to improving the assessment of an officer's performance and capabilities and to determine capacity building needs and suitability for particular areas of responsibility/assignment, the present system of writing of Annual confidential Reports of the members of the All India Services has been replaced with the All India Services (Performance Appraisal Report) Rule, 2007, notified on 14th March, 2007. The new rules have been implemented for assessment of performance of the Indian Administrative Service officers from the year 2007-2008.

The broad contours of the new rules include use of performance appraisal for career planning and training, preparation of work-plan, provisions for health check-up, numerical grading, integrity certificate, maintenance of comprehensive personal dossier, disclosure of the report and constitution of a Referral Board to decide representations from officers.

As per the provisions of these rules, the reporting officer is required to comment on the financial integrity as well as moral and intellectual integrity of the officer reported upon.

Delay in prosecution

2254. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether sanctions to prosecute senior officers is taking a lot of time and prosecuting authorities are required to remind very often to get such sanctions;

(b) if so, whether Government is exercising a distinction between the cases where the prosecutions are being launched in cases involving performance "official duties" of the officer and those where there is direct evidence of corrupt practices being indulged; and

(c) the number of such cases that are pending for over one year as on 31st of December 2007?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) Sanctions are generally accorded or refused within the precribed time limit of three months. Detailed guidelines for checking delay in grant of sanction for prosecution have been issued by the Government in November, 2006.

(b) The Government considers cases for accord of sanction for prosecution of Government employees in accordance with the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

(c) In regard to the proposals for accord of sanction submitted by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), 7 cases were pending with the respective competent authorities for over one year as on 31.12.2007, as reported by the CBI.

Filling of backlog vacancies

2255. SHRI GANDHI AZAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of backlog vacancies that are still not filled in by several Departments;

(b) by when these vacancies would be filled in through Special Recruitment Drive;

(c) whether it is a fact that now a days highly qualified and eligible SC/ST candidates are available in the Open Market/Departments;

(d) whether it is also a fact that some Departments still say that "eligible/suitable SC/ST are not available";

(e) if so, the solution for this with Government; and

(f) the kinds of efforts that are being made by Government to sort out these problems?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) and (b) Various Ministries/Departments had identified 60,845 backlog reserved vacancies of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes which could be filled up. 53,444 of these vacancies have already been filled up by launching a Special Recruitment Drive.

(c) to (f) Direct recruitment to a post is made from amongst the candidates who apply for the post and promotion to a post is made from amongst the candidates available in the consideration zone. Eligible and suitable SC/ST candidates, sometimes, do not apply or are not available within the zone of consideration or the extended zone of consideration.

Backlog of vacancies

†2256. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that still a number of posts for SC/ST and OBC are lying vacant in Central Government and its undertakings/Establishments/Institutions including the All India Services;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Government has decided to clear the backlog of reserved vacancies speedily; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.